



*LERGP Crop Update  
October 09, 2025*

*Photo credit-  
Kim Knappenberger*

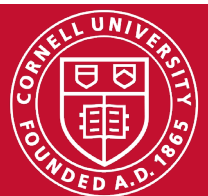


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*The Lake Erie Regional Grape Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extensions in Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara county NY and in Erie County PA.*

# Business Management

Andrew Holden, Business Management Educator, Penn State University, LERGP

## Drought Conditions and Crop Insurance

Harvest is rolling along throughout the belt and growers have been sharing that they have seen lower than expected yields due to drought stress. One to two tons below predicted is what I am hearing most. Before this week's much needed rain, we were 5.26 inches under our average rain for June-September as Jennifer shared in last weeks update.

How should we approach this dry spell from a management point of view? Weather is always a production risk that is largely out of our control. We try to manage environmental risk with practices like drainage, site selection, even root stocks in some grapes. But when years like this one come along, the driest grape growing season in 10+ years, what should be done? One possible solution to not enough water is irrigation, but past studies have shown that the cost to install, run, and maintain a system wouldn't be profitable. Additionally, not every vineyard has access to the water required to irrigate. If we were in an area that saw dry years like this on a regular basis, irrigation would be more applicable. Because we can't predict the future, there wasn't much we could do in the way of preseason management decisions that differs from the average year. The one tool that helps with extreme weather risk is crop insurance.

So far, I am not aware of any claims filled for crop insurance due to the drought. The 1–2 ton decrease was not enough to trigger most folks' plans. If you had a high coverage plan, it is possible that a loss like this could be triggered, but most don't see a benefit with paying the high cost for those plans. As dry weather in the berry growing months is rare, I received a few questions on how insurance would work in a drought scenario. If a grower doesn't realize the loss until after grapes are delivered, how is that claim processed? After speaking with insurance providers, I would advise anyone who thinks they have an indemnifiable loss to contact their agent as soon as possible so that they can send out an assessor. In terms of how the loss/payment would be calculated they would approach it like a frost loss and look at historical average vs actual. Proving the drought conditions would be done by looking at vineyard conditions and local weather data vs historical averages. Then depending on your coverage, if a loss meets you coverage level, you will receive a payment.

Thankfully we have not seen losses large enough to trigger payments, but if you have, I would be interested in hearing about it. Tuesday's rain of ~2 inches should help some, but still leaves us below average rainfall for the summer.

### What I'm Reading/Webinars:

- [Beware of Rising Fraud: Safeguard Your Workforce \(Includes a Spanish guide below for your employees\)](#) - The Ag Workforce Journal
- [Farmer Sentiment Holds Steady as Tariff Support Drops](#) – Farm Doc
- [Farmer Aid of as much as \\$15 Billion Expected this Week](#) – Farm Doc
- **Webinar: [AgWorks: Farm Taxes—Basic Filing Requirements](#)**
  - Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 12:00 PM EST



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# Viticulture

Jennifer Russo, Viticulture Extension Specialist, LERGP

## In the Vineyard

I am thankful for the rain that occurred in our region on October 7, 2025. If you scroll down to Kim Knappenberger’s article, she put together a table with precipitation totals for each of our Cornell NEWA weather stations in our region. The amounts that fell in a 24-hour period ranged from the lowest accumulations at 1.25 inches in Forestville (Chautauqua County), 1.34 inches in East Westfield (Chautauqua County), and 1.35 inches in Burt (Niagara County), to the highest accumulations at 2.18 inches in Lake City (Erie County PA), 2.45 inches in Westfield South (Chautauqua County), to 2.58 inches accumulation in Lockport (Niagara County). The average amount of rainfall across all our stations was 1.77 inches.

Below in Table 1, is the 2025 Veraison to Harvest Week 6 and Week 7 data comparison for both, Chautauqua and Niagara County samples. We have been sending out the weekly Veraison to Harvest publications in separate emails to our grower bases, but I wanted to be sure to include it in this week’s crop update as well. Most of the white varieties have been harvested with the exception of Portland’s Riesling, which was taken off of the vine today. We are still hanging most of our red varieties. One of our Niagara County growers reported that *“the recent rainfall of just under 2” is a welcome relief to the local drought. Our vineyard has responded by coming out a drought stasis and has quickly greened up. Grape berry weight has remained small at about 1.5 grams per berry. Flavors and sugars are good, but those of us looking for full phenolic ripeness are still waiting. It will be an anxious night tonight as the potential for frost exists. If there is no frost we can hang in there for 2-3 more weeks”*.

		10/6/2025	9/29/2025	10/6/2025	9/29/2025	10/6/2025	9/29/2025	10/6/2025	9/29/2025	10/6/2025	9/22/2025
Variety	Description	Berry Weight	Berry Weight	Brix	Brix	pH	pH	TA	TA	YAN	YAN
Concord	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Niagara	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Seyval blanc	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Marquette	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Riesling	Portland	171.8	159.3	18	17	3.39	3.2	9.4	10.5	317	260
Cabernet Sauvignon	Portland	144.8	141.4	22	20.2	3.28	3.19	8.6	8.7	135	113
Lemberger	Portland	169.8	182.4	21.7	21.4	3.25	3.16	8.5	9	129	160
Vignoles	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Cabernet Franc	Fredonia	119.2	137	22.3	21.8	3.29	3.22	8	8.3	106	79
Gewurztraminer	Portland	Harvested	162	Harvested	21.7	Harvested	3.5	Harvested	6.5	Harvested	185
Chardonnay	Portland	Harvested	137.7	Harvested	22.7	Harvested	3.47	Harvested	5.5	Harvested	232
Elvira	Portland	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested
Chardonnay	Niagara Co.	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	Harvested	69
Merlot	Niagara Co.	132.8	143.4	24	21.6	3.18	3.14	6.8	7	149	53
Cabernet Franc	Niagara Co.	113.8	111.1	24.8	23	3.22	3.11	7	8.1	44	33
Cabernet Sauvignon	Niagara Co.	110.5	124.4	24.2	21.8	3.19	3.1	7.5	6.5	46	32
Syrah	Niagara Co.	202.7	213.4	21.3	20.8	3.18	3.11	6.7	7	116	104
Riesling	Niagara Co.	Harvested	145.4	Harvested	18.7	Harvested	3.04	Harvested	8.8	Harvested	121

Table 1. Veraison to Harvest 2025 Week 6 & 7 data comparison for Chautauqua and Niagara County Samples from 10-6-2025

I wanted to update our grower members on work that has taken most of our Lake Erie Regional Grape Team away over the past few weeks. We have worked in concert with our Penn State Spotted Lanternfly Research Team, which conducted the pilot SLF Mechanized Harvest Research last season, and included NYS Grape IPM Coordinator, Kyle Bekelja, on the team this season. Our collaborative team ran some preliminary spray trials with two different chemistries, one with a one-day Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI) and the other with a three-day PHI. We conducted these trials in Pennsylvania on vinifera and labrusca grapevines. Photo 1 below shows Spotted Lanternflies feeding on Concord vines in Pennsylvania. This worked required us to count all the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) on the vines before spraying, immediately at the Restricted-Entry Interval (REI), and at different daily timed intervals until and after the PHI and beyond. As you can imagine, this work takes time, and hence, our absence. We are not prepared to share any of that data, I just wanted to explain our absence and let you know that this team is working in the background to develop harvest guidelines and mitigation strategies for mechanically harvested blocks with SLF infestations. This work has never been conducted before, and we have submitted a Federal Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant under the direction of Dr. Julie Urban in hopes to expand this study and be able to help our industry and other mechanically harvested grape growing regions.





*Photo 1. Spotted Lanternflies feeding on Concord vines in Pennsylvania.*

I also wanted to address the recent Spotted Lanternfly Adult that was found in Chautauqua County by one of our LERGP grower members near their shop. The grower took a photo and sent it to me. I confirmed that it was an adult SLF, which the grower already knew. I instructed the grower to collect the sample, because before New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) can officially confirm the reported find, it must be genetically tested. This happened on a Saturday Afternoon. I immediately sent the photo and address directly to our contacts at NYSDAM and officially reported it directly to Ag and Markets reporting tool. I also contacted all our Industry Processor Representatives to alert them to be vigilant with inspections. By 7:40 AM on the following Monday, the lead on SLF for NYSDAM called me to thank us for the report and to notify me that he was sending out two NYSDAM inspectors that morning to join us for a survey of the property and surrounding areas. Since then, NYSDAM and LERGP have been conducting grid search surveys of the surrounding area and will continue to do so through Thursday, October


9, 2025. I am very proud of our grower that reported the find, the quick action of NYSDAM, and of our team for mobilizing and addressing this find very seriously. It is proof that the collaborative system we have for monitoring and reporting works. I am certain that we will be able to give official notice when the genetic testing results are in and there will be follow up information. If you have any questions on what to do should you locate a Spotted Lanternfly in NY or PA, please visit our website for more information or scan the QR code below. [Click Here for SLF information.](#)

**Report sightings:**


<p>New York</p> 	<p>Pennsylvania</p> 
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# PA Update

Megan Luke, Penn State Extension Viticulture and Tree Fruit Educator

**The time is upon us to make any fall applications of herbicide to reduce pressure in vineyards in the spring of 2026. As simazine is an active ingredient commonly used in grapes for post-harvest applications in combination with other products, you should be aware that this active ingredient is currently in the early stages of the EPA review process. While the process is currently slated to be completed in 2030, early comments are more likely to impact the overall process than those made at the end. Therefore, please review the documentation and comment as relevant to your operation and continued use dictates.**

## **Per the EPA:**

“The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is releasing and seeking public comment on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) draft biological opinions (BiOp) for the pesticides atrazine and simazine. Atrazine and simazine are two widely used herbicides in the United States. The FWS draft biological opinions for atrazine and simazine are available on EPA’s Biological Opinions Webpage and public comments may be submitted to docket number [EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0514](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0514) at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The draft biological opinions will be available for public comment for 60 days.

After the 60-day public comment period, EPA will provide FWS with the comments received for consideration before FWS finalizes the biological opinions. EPA intends to continue working with FWS and the registrants prior to FWS’s final BiOps to ensure that the proposed mitigations are technologically and economically feasible. The final atrazine and simazine BiOps are scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2026, as required by a federal court order. Following completion of the final FWS biological opinions, EPA plans to implement the mitigation measures described in the FWS final biological opinions. The final NMFS biological opinion is scheduled for 2030.”

## **General Weed Management Guidelines**

- 1) **Identification** The most important aspect of management is properly identifying the plant you are trying to eradicate. If you are unsure of what plant you are dealing with, take photos of the top and underside of the leaves, the stem where the leaf connects, any flowers or buds that are present, and the roots (if possible) and contact Extension via text or email with an ID request. Both Penn State and Cornell Extension have bulletins outlining strategies for managing specific weeds on their respective websites, these can help with choosing best practices.
- 2) **Cultural Management** Determine the best practices for managing the weed prior to choosing herbicides. Some weeds can be managed through mowing or cultivation, while other species may increase in number with those practices. Generally, you will always want to burn down with herbicides or mow/cultivate prior to the plant setting seed. It’s important to understand the life cycle of the weed in question to know when the best time is to employ the methods at your disposal for maximum efficacy.

- 3) **Herbicide Application** Remember: when using herbicides the label is the law, and herbicides are labeled for use *not only in certain crops, but sometimes for specific target weeds as well*. Knowing what your target is makes it easier to choose the best herbicide, and to also determine if there has been documented resistance in that species to common chemistries.
- 4) **Assess Results** Observations of the results of your management strategies provides valuable information for the future. Things to make note of include the percentage of target weeds that were killed, the consistency of die-back across the treated blocks, and if the weeds recovered after treatment. These notes help to rule out issues like sprayer malfunction or poor coverage and allow documentation of herbicide resistance.

**General scouting and management:** Current pests of concern in unharvested grapes include the multi-colored Asian lady beetle, which can emit a noxious chemical when disturbed, potentially causing taint in juice and wine, and fruit flies, which can promote sour rot. I have not observed this pest in vineyards this year, but if you have observed MALB in high numbers in previous years, it is imperative to scout for these pests to reduce the risk of rejected shipments at the processor. I've also received many questions from growers in both PA and NY regarding weed management. It appears that most growers have at least one or two species in their vineyards that are resistant to common herbicides or that quickly regrow throughout the season after herbicide application. If you suspect that you have a resistant weed population on your property, there are several steps you can take to reduce stress and the cost of controlling it.

**Multi-colored Asian lady beetle (MALB) *Harmonia axyridis* (Figure 1):** Multi-colored Asian lady beetle is typically a beneficial insect in vineyards, consuming pest insects such as aphids, as well as spider mites. Late in the season, MALB can at times congregate within grape clusters, and when this occurs, they can emit a noxious chemical when they are disturbed, such as during harvest activities. This chemical can lead to taint in juice and wine, and a high number of MALB may be grounds for rejection of harvested grapes.



Figure 1

5430054

Jon Yuschock, Bugwood.org

**Fruit flies:** Sour rot infections appear to be a function of bacteria, yeast, and fruit flies on damaged grape berries, which encourages disease progression throughout the entire cluster as ripening progresses. Sour rot symptoms have been observed when berries are around 15 Brix and daily temperatures are at least 68°, and tight-clustered cultivars (e.g., 'Pinot gris', 'Riesling', 'Sauvignon blanc', 'Vignoles') are at greatest risk compared to those that have looser clusters. A chemical program using antimicrobials and insecticides directed at controlling yeast, AAB, and fruit flies can minimize the risk of sour rot. Weekly applications of insecticides and antimicrobial sprays, commencing at 15 Brix, may be necessary for vineyards with extensive disease or insect damage to prevent added pressure from sour rot.

*Drosophila* species on grape clusters (left) and *Botrytis* bunch rot on sour rot-infected grape clusters (right). Note the fungal growth, which is not part of the sour rot complex but exacerbates the damage. Left photo courtesy of Rachael White, University of Georgia; right photo courtesy of Cain Hickey, Penn State Extension.

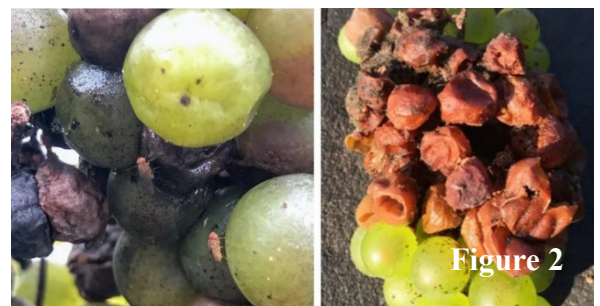


Figure 2

## Spotted Lanternfly

There have been reports of adult SLF in Erie County, PA, and Chautauqua County, NY. The respective state agencies have not yet found an established population of SLF this year in either county; all adult insects have been individual “hitchhikers” from infested areas. Erie County is not currently expected to come under quarantine. Grid searches are underway in both states to confirm that established populations are not present or likely to be present next year. The LERGP team continues to participate in research aimed at improving management strategies for growers of mechanically harvested grapes.

The PDA, DEC, Ag and Markets, Cornell, and Penn State Extension are strongly encouraging anyone to report any sightings. In the event of the discovery of an aggregation or established population in Erie County, the PDA will provide mitigation and eradication of the pest on your property to prevent it from spreading.

**If you see an adult SLF, catch and crush it, take a photo, report it, and contact a member of the LERGP team immediately!**

- **Pennsylvania Reporting:** 1-888-4BAD-FLY (1-888-422-3359) or <https://services.agriculture.pa.gov/SLFReport/>
- **New York Reporting:** <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/a08d60f6522043f5b-d04229e00acdd63>



**Additionally, if you or someone you know is traveling into a quarantine zone, be sure to check vehicles for adult SLF hitchhikers upon arrival in Erie, PA, or Chautauqua County, NY. Going through a car wash prior to entering the NON-quarantine area will reduce the likelihood of SLF on vehicles.**

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# Updates and Information

Kimberly Knappenberger, Viticulture & IPM Extension Support Specialist, LERGP

## NEWA

What a lovely rain we had on Tuesday! I'm sure that you all agree that it was incredibly needed and welcomed. I would assume that even if you were harvesting you were probably ok with it. Above is a table of the precipitation collected at each of the stations – generally speaking it looks like we got 1.5-2.0" across the grape belt. The Grape Berry Moth GDD and Base 50 GDD are included if you are interested. It looks like I will be heading to the Dunkirk station to clean the rain bucket, and if you happened to look at the precipitation for East Westfield, I had to do some subtraction for this chart because there seemed to be 2 instances of interference that were picked up and gave a total of 6.54" for the rain event. I have contacted NEWA to see about having those extra readings removed. Portland (LERGP west) had a piece of dried grass in the rain bucket that was just whisking the rain straight down through the sensor without allowing the tipping mechanism to tip and record. That should be fixed moving forward.

As always, if you see something that doesn't make sense please let me know at [ksk76@cornell.edu](mailto:ksk76@cornell.edu).



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SEASON AFTER SEASON

<b>NEWA Location</b>	<b>Wild grape bloom date*</b>	<b>GBM GDD total on 10/8/25</b>	<b>GDD Base 50 10/8/225</b>	<b>Accumulated precipitation on 10/7/25</b>
Burt (NYS Mesonet)	6/9/25	2535	2590	1.35
Newfane (Chateau Niagara)	6/5/25	2753	2855	1.84
Ransomville	6/3/25	2935	3026	1.81
Lockport	6/3/25	2928	3011	2.58
Brant	5/29/25	2883	3017	1.71
Versailles	5/30/25	2710	2789	1.61
Hanover	6/4/25	2753	2833	1.52
Silver Creek (Route 5)	6/4/25	2818	2871	1.63
Silver Creek (Double A)	5/30/25	2904	2964	1.77
Dunkirk (Route 5)	6/4/25	2780	2772	-none recorded
Sheridan	5/29/25	2922	2979	1.76
Sheridan (Liberty)	5/31/25	2927	2977	1.60
Forestville	6/3/25	2799	2855	1.25
East Fredonia	6/4/25	2730	2830	1.65
Fredonia (NYS Mesonet)	6/4/25	2714	2757	
Brocton Escarpment	6/3/25	2761	2863	1.7
Portland/Portland LERGP West	6/3/2025	2807	2867	1.59
East Westfield	6/4/25	2741	2850	1.34
Westfield	6/3/25	2836	2913	1.60
Westfield (South)	6/3/25	2806	2878	2.45
East Ripley	6/2/25	2933	2990	1.61
Ripley	6/3/25	2893	2976	1.96
Ripley Escarpment	6/3/25	2797	2955	1.83
Ripley State Line	6/3/25	2865	2984	1.96
North East State Line	6/4/25	2775	2884	1.81
North East Escarpment	6/3/25	2771	2860	1.92
North East Sidehill	6/3/25	2802	2884	1.88
North East Lab	6/4/25	2814	2872	1.98
Harborcreek	6/2/25	2927	2982	1.91
Harborcreek Escarpment	6/4/25	2688	2767	1.79
Lake City	6/2/25	2857	2947	2.18
Lake City (Mason Farms)	6/3/25	2899	3074	1.57

Table 1. Phenology-based Degree Day model results for Grape Berry Moth by NEWA station location in the Lake Erie Region. \*Estimated date provided by NEWA website

# Links of Interest:

**Cornell Cooperative Extension:**

<https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension>

**Efficient Vineyard:**

<https://www.efficientvineyard.com/>

**LERGP:**

<https://lergp.cce.cornell.edu/>

<https://lergp.com/>

**NYSIPM:**

<https://cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management>

**Veraison to Harvest:**

<https://cals.cornell.edu/viticulture-enology/research-extension/veraison-harvest>

**Spotted Lanternfly Pocket Guide:**

<https://lergp.com/spotted-lanternfly>